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SOME ESSENTIALS OF MORAL EDUCATION.

The chief end of education has been variously designated, but there is a growing consensus of opinion that this end is found in a noble manhood and womanhood; in short, in the formation of character. It is probable that if we communicate to the word "character" a sufficient content this designation will hold. "By its ethical influence a system of education must stand or fall," writes Kappa, in a terse sentence whose very pointedness and brevity seem to preclude even the possibility of contradiction.

Yet this writer, in his delightful and searching book, "Let Youth but Know," remarkable for its clear vision and sanity on present educational problems, and for its suggestion of a curriculum inspired by a "religion of the intellect," seems to offer us a different end in education when he tells us that "the fundamental task of a liberal education" is "to awaken and to keep ever alert the faculty of wonder in the human soul." This end, however, is not a different one in Kappa's mind. He has merely borne us along to the borderland of religion, which the moral life must touch for its deeper sanctities, and by the "faculty of wonder" he understands that "overwhelming conception" of the mystery and vastness of the universe, in the infinite and in the infinitesimal, which is in effect moralizing by rendering every mean thought and ignoble action utterly inept and ludicrously out of proportion. In the present writer's view, too, the faculty of wonder must be inherent in the character attained; otherwise the goal of education has not been won.

The aptitude for wonder in the little child finds fitting expression in the well-worn and little-understood couplet:

"Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are!"

One of the writer's earliest recollections is of standing at the bottom of an entry by the back gate of one of those tiny houses that line—innumerable and in wearying monotony—the streets of our large towns and of looking up through the

iron hoop that formed the segment of a circle at the top of the gate at the blue sky above. He cannot say why this indelible impression was then made on his mind. But the fact remains.

The same faculty of wonder in the adult Wordsworth refers to in his memorable line:

"We live by admiration, hope, and love."

Even "love is not love" if it be not capable of this subtle sense. In the greatest this faculty of wonder culminates in awe; that terrible power that hides in silent souls and flashes riving forth only in emergencies that stir the very depths of the heart. "Mere morality," writes Edward Howard Griggs, "would mean cold conformity to intellectually recognized principles of conduct, with no touch of enthusiasm, no sense of the infinite reach of life, no atmosphere of wonder and reverence. Such morality is obviously inadequate to the ends of human life, and moral education must include the task of cultivating the higher religious attitude."

"Moral education," to be adequate to the ends of human life, "must include the task of cultivating the higher religious attitude." Here again, how impossible it proves to be to draw those sharp dividing lines, so alluring to the merely mechanical intellect, so amenable to easy and fictitious verbal triumphs, and to front once more the stupendous fact, so crushing to our smaller vanities, that there is no break in the seamless robe wherewith the universe is dressed. The facile distinction between moral education on the one hand and religious education on the other is drawn readily enough, and has its conveniences; but to conceive that at such and such a point the one ends and at such and such a point the other begins is to disrupt the universe. Moral education without vista is no education at all; it is truncated pedantry. Moral education only then begins to exercise its more potent ministry when it confronts and astounds and overwhelms us with categorical imperatives whose origins are wrapped in mystery but whose obligatoriness upon us for this very reason is immediate and certain and bows us in submission and awe.

The moral education then of which we speak, and the "character" in which it culminates, must be conceived as embracing in their content an element, which, for want of more adequate words to express it, we call wonder, reverence, awe; an attitude of the soul which proves to be the Bridge of the Gods to the highest Realities.

One more element we presuppose as inherent in the "character" in which moral education finds its culmination, namely, that passion for human service which spends itself and is spent for others without miserly calculation or circumstantial prudence; which with a pure disinterestedness repays the debt it owes to humanity and is ready at any moment to merge its own in a higher blessedness. This also has no word adequate to express it. It is more than conduct. It is that which inspires conduct, the dedicated spirit that loses itself and finds itself in the love by which the servant of man enriches his fellows. The moral education that inspires a due sense of wonder, reverence, awe in the contemplation of this mysterious and vast universe of being, and a disinterested passion for the service of our kind, is alone adequate to the ends of human life.

Nor must moral education be conceived as too specifically moral. We must live resolutely, not only in the Good, narrowly conceived, but in the Beautiful and in the True; in short, our only sanity is discoverable in living in the Whole. For, wherever we tread, above us are the infinite reaches, and below us, invisible, the fathomless depths, forever humbling to the finality of our moral, æsthetic and intellectual judgments. And if it be true, as in the deepest sense it is true, that the "pure in heart see God," Herbart uttered no less a truth than Christ when he said that "the stupid man cannot be virtuous." The artist too intent upon the æsthetically beautiful, the thinker too intent upon the intellectually true, the moralist too intent upon the morally good, each in a sense too specialized, all wander in bypaths of a narrow world; they do not march along "the grand roads of the universe" that lead to perfectness and that lead to God. We should see life steadily and see it whole. The education of the past, especially in our primary schools, has been too specifically intel-

lectual, and if we have succeeded in producing a shallow smartness, an automatic dexterity, and even a clever criminality, there is little cause for wonder. "Knowledge is vicious if the aim be not virtuous" was long ago said by Plato. The pendulum is now swinging with considerable velocity the other way. And we have to be on our guard no less against any tendency toward a paltry priggishness, a puritanic ugliness, and a pharisaic sterility. It appears now probable that intellectual education and moral education are on the way to a due balancing in our schools; but true equipoise and wholeness will only be found when we summon not only the good and the true but also the beautiful to our aid. Art has not yet endowed our schools with loveliness, and until she arrive the final aroma, bloom, and quality—the "atmosphere" that alone justifies all—will be lacking. For education is concerned not with the intellect and with the will alone; it should take due account also for its surest effects of those emotional and spiritual affinities from which only art may win the subtlest response.

By the ministry of art I mean—to take a concrete example—that in our large cities the common school should not be a barrack-like fortress, with bare, lofty, rigid lines of brick, and gray, hard, asphalted playground, devised for mere utilitarian economy, but a veritable oasis apart, green with grass and trees and gay with flowers, where slum and tenement and flat and street would be forgotten, and to which, in later years, the grown man and woman would revert with yearning tenderness as to a place where beauty, with many endearments without and within, softened and subdued the more bracing intellectual and moral atmosphere and discipline, and linked with gracious touches and treasured associations the present and the future. The artists of the past, they who builded our solemn temples, they who wrought into their madonnas the divine in womanhood and made glorious music echo and re-echo through vaulted aisles, consecrated to the church their high genius and talent. The great artists and creators that are to come will dedicate not only to the church but to the common school their highest and their best.

We are here in the incalculable regions. We may measure intellectual advance with approximate accuracy; we may even calculate with some measure of precision the grades of character. But we have no gauge for the soul; this may flash forth at any moment, when the eliciting circumstance is to hand, and baffle all our presuppositions and plans. Our only safety lies in environing the child not in school only but in the home and the social environment amid which he dwells with countless influences of the good, the beautiful, and the true, and in awaiting from him the inevitable response. The child goes forth every day, and the first object he looks upon that object he becomes.¹

The problem of moral education is, then, more than the problem of the school and the teacher, of the minister and of the church; it is, above all, the problem of the parent and of the home, of the social environment and of the nation as a whole. The moral atmosphere of a school may be never so bracing, yet its efficacy will be marred and even rendered nugatory by contamination in the home; and even when school and home and church combine in all wholesome ways for the moral welfare of the child we have still to take serious account of the blasting influences of a pernicious social environment, of unnatural surroundings, and of the stress and storm and temptation that may come and batter against him in the struggle for life in our present economic order.

Most powerful of all preservative moral forces is the true parent, with veracity, integrity, and affection in the home impregnating hourly and daily imperceptibly through the years; there is no armor like to this with which to front the bludgeonings and the subtler and deadlier allurements of life. But next to the wise parent there is no other influence to which we may with greater security entrust the child with all its fine sensitiveness than to that of the true teacher. It has been said that "a schoolmaster can revolutionize a town in twenty years." In our increasingly complex environment this is not so true as once it was. We have to reckon more and more with other

¹ *Vide* Whitman, "A Child Went Forth."

weighty factors that must necessarily coöperate with the teacher if his efforts are to be attended with success, among the chief of which are, we repeat, a healthy home, an enlightened church, natural and beautiful surroundings, and the quickening and ameliorative influence of accompanying social reform. Through all these, and not through the school only, through the home, the church, the street, and the child's whole environment, must goodness and beauty and truth make their constant appeal to the child. Mere cloistered influences suffice not; they must be all-pervading and all-operative; not for this hour or that hour, but for all hours; not for this place or that place, but for all places; not for such and such circumstances only, but for all circumstances. The sanctifying influences of art are not for the church only, as in the past they largely were, nor for the school only, nor for the home only; they must speak through the interests and habits of a people in all their walks and ways. The clergyman is not the only moral reformer; the parent and teacher are becoming more and more conscious of their own moral responsibility toward the children and the coming generations, and will devolve it less and less on any intermediary; and in the long run this moral responsibility will be recognized as the valued prerogative of the people as a whole.

Our concern here is mainly with the teacher. At present, so far as the great majority of the children of the nation are concerned, it is to him largely that we must look for rendering them susceptible of response to the highest influences that emanate from the national life. He may be in this in no small measure usurping the peculiar privileged responsibilities of parents; but this is an exigency of the situation. And, among other things, it is to be hoped that he will do something toward creating the parent that is to be, the father and mother who realize from whom the most vital moral influences may permeate the child, and who duly prepare themselves for their parental and priestly functions. He may seem also to be usurping the province of the minister of religion; but this is another exigency of the situation. As the State has discovered that it cannot securely rely upon the parents and the churches

alone for the education of its coming citizens on the intellectual side, so it is now discovering that it cannot securely rely upon the parents and churches alone for their education on the moral side. The State itself is becoming more and more the parent and priest of its children; and we may look to it to nurture in the nation itself a loftier conception of parenthood.

But the chief servant of the State in this regard is the teacher, and on him more than on any other the destinies of the future wait. In large measure, we have said, he must combine in himself not only the teacher's but the parental and high priestly function. He has not only in his charge a dawning intelligence, but a soul's welfare. For five hours a day, for five days a week, for some ten years the child is his, plastic to every impression; not less sensitive must he be than the potter with delicate fingers at his wheel turning dull clay, with unerring touch, to form and worth and loveliness. Of these seven millions of the nation's children now malleable in his hands, of this raw material, what products shall he make? Here are five hours almost daily—often more, for the true teacher does not content himself with school supervision only: is familiar in the home, at games, and in the main interests of the child's life outside the school. To what account shall he turn them? These school hours too are not hours during which mere desultory and haphazard influences are at work, but hours during which definite conscious efforts are directed toward the child with a clear view to the realization in him of certain well-conceived ends by maturely planned processes. Compared with such efforts as these, fully and consciously made, and extending over so long a period of time each day, even the parent's more vital and individual influence, as a rule cursorily exercised and without well-planned purpose and scope (many fathers see very little of their children), may appear small. And when the size of classes is greatly reduced, as must inevitably sooner or later be the case, making it possible for the teacher to give individual attention to each child; and when the teacher is required, as even now in the schools of the State he is required, more or less, to have as clear a conception of the purpose of moral training and as intelligent

methods for carrying it out (paying due regard, for example, to the capacity of a child for moral ideas and impressions at succeeding stages of his growth and following a comprehensive and thoroughly systematized plan), as are required of him for the intellectual side of his work, we are placing in his hands a power of most momentous national significance. And, ere long, knowing how much we depend upon him for the nation's moral welfare, and how significant of the most vital results his office may be, we shall honor his calling among the highest, permit only such to be dedicated to it as have the highest intellectual and moral worth, and remunerate them, so far as we can remunerate them, in such a way as to clearly reveal our recognition of their high value to the State. There is demanded of the potter the most sensitive delicacy of touch in the manipulation of his clay at the wheel; of the teacher there is demanded a far subtler delicacy still. The potter knows beforehand the exact form the clay shall take; the teacher may work to no set pattern in his mind, and must be eager only that the true individuality of the child shall harmoniously unfold. This separate individuality of each child is sacred and the true teacher will, above all else, respect its sanctity. To this end it will be necessary for him to know not only something of the science of education, a science that is rendered possible only by the unity of human life, the likeness of each to all and the common universal experiences of the race; but he must know something too of the art of education which recognizes with no less insistence the uniqueness and separateness of each individuality, the element of the incalculable and the untried which gives life richness and variety. Upon a due balancing of the methods of science and of art, upon a due recognition of individual and universal claims, upon the well establishment of the fundamental moral principles common to humanity and the conserving at the same time of individual moral judgment and the encouragement of individual moral initiative, the success of a teacher will depend.

With such a view of the teacher's function and mission, especially as the State confers upon him more and more parental and priestly powers, as he becomes more and more

not only an intellectual but a moral educator, as he takes more and more account of individuality in the child and becomes an artist and not merely an artisan, and as we look more and more to him as the main ultimate safeguard of the nation, it becomes imperative that for an office of such untellable significance he shall have the most thorough intellectual and moral training before there be entrusted to him for pilotage "young lives . . . like a fleet of ships . . . soon to sail out over the measureless seas on the soul's voyage."

We are only now, at length, beginning to recognize the moral significance of the common school, the sacred apostolate of the teacher, and to realize that he, or she, who ministers behind the teacher's desk stands on consecrated ground.

HARROLD JOHNSON.

LONDON.

SELF-REALIZATION AS THE MORAL END.

The purpose of this paper is avowedly polemical. I desire to vindicate the principle of self-realization as the moral end against certain types of negative criticism. The critics whom I have in view are of diverse schools; while they concur in rejecting self-development as the standard of conduct, they are by no means agreed as to the alternative. There is even a school of writers who have made up their minds that no satisfactory alternative exists and that every basis of morals which has yet been propounded is either "false" or "inadequate."

I propose (1) to give a brief outline of the destructive criticism to which the principle of self-development has been subjected, and (2) to point out the considerations which in my opinion render the whole criticism futile.

The argument may be summarized thus: To define a man's "duty" as "the fulfilment of his function as a member or element in a social whole," is to enunciate a true but a wholly unimportant proposition. It is in fact a sheer platitude. "Duty" may well be identical with "function," but what we really want is a definite and detailed account of what man's duty or func-